AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PIOUS AND BENEVOLENT,

PROPOSING AN

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

FOR THE

SUPPORT OF MISSIONARIES

IN

The *Highlands* and adjacent Islands of *Scotland*,
The Isles of *Jersey*, *Guernsey*, and *Newfoundland*,
The *West Indies*, and the Provinces of *Nova Scotia*
and *Quebec*.

BY THOMAS COKE, LL.D.

LONDON:
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#391A

Briſtol, March 12, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I GREATLY approve of your Propoſal for raiſing a Subſcription in order to ſend Miſſionaries to the Highlands of Scotland, the Iſlands of Guernſey and Jerſey, the Leeward Iſlands, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. It is not eaſy to conceive the extreme want there is, in all thoſe places, of men that will not count their lives dear unto themſelves, ſo they may teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of GOD.

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To Dr. COKE.

Friday 10th I baptized a young Negro, who appeared to be deeply serious & much affected, as indeed did the whole congregation

Journal Vol IV. 327

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PIOUS and BENEVOLENT,

&c. &c. &c.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

SOME time paſt I took the liberty of addreſſing you, in behalf of a miſſion intended to be eſtabliſhed in the Britiſh dominions in *Aſia*; and many of you very generouſly entered into that important plan. We have not indeed loſt ſight of it at preſent; on the contrary, we have lately received a letter of encouragement from a principal gentleman in the province of *Bengal*. But the providence of GOD has lately opened to us ſo many doors nearer home, that Mr. Weſley thinks it imprudent to hazard at preſent the lives of any of our preachers, by ſending them to ſo great a diſtance, and amidſt ſo many uncertainties and difficulties; when ſo large a field of action is afforded us in countries to which we have ſo much eaſier admittance, and where the ſucceſs, through the bleſſing of GOD, is more or leſs certain.

WE cannot but be ſenſible of the fallen ſtate of Chriſtendom, and the extenſive room for labour which faithful miniſters may find in every country therein. But ſome of the nations which are called Chriſtian, are deeper ſunk in ignorance and im-

piety than others; and even of the moſt enlightened, various parts are ſtill buried in the groſſeſt darkneſs.

No kingdom under heaven, I believe, has been more bleſſed with the light of the goſpel than *North Britain*. Numerous have been the men of moſt eminent piety and abilities, whom GOD in his providence and grace has been pleaſed to raiſe among that people. And yet, in the *Highlands* and adjacent *Iſlands*, many ſcores, perhaps I may ſay hundreds of thouſands, are little better than the rudeſt barbarians *. The ſtate of this unhappy people has been fully laid before the Public by a very laudable ſociety in *Edinburgh*, which was formed for the very purpoſe of ſpreading religion in thoſe benighted parts. But the members of this benevolent inſtitution have candidly acknowledged their great inſufficiency for this important undertaking, for want both of money and men. And indeed the grand deſign of that ſociety, which is almoſt entirely directed to the eſtabliſhment of *ſchools*, will by no means interfere with the preſent plan. *We* may, by the grace of GOD, ſupply their defects; and while they are leading the *riſing* generation to the light and truth, we may, under the divine bleſſing, be arreſting thoſe of *maturer* age in their preſent career of ſin and folly. The Lord ſeems to be pointing out our way in the preſent inſtance, for he has lately raiſed up a zealous young man, well verſed in the *Erſe* (the language ſpoken by the people of whom we are now treating), to whom Mr. *Weſley* has given an unlimited commiſſion to viſit the Highlands and adjacent Iſlands of *Scot-*

* A late writer employed by the government to eſtimate the improvements which may be made in the fiſheries in that part of Scotland, and who has been indefatigable in his reſearches, ſcruples not to aſſert it as his confirmed ſentiment, that the people in that country who anſwer this deſcription, are not fewer than *half a million*.

land.

land. We have alſo one or two more in our view, who are maſters of the *Erſe* language, who, we have reaſon to believe, would accept of a ſimilar commiſſion. But the charges would be conſiderable, and our preſent regular expences in *Scotland*, beyond what the poverty of our Scotch ſocieties can afford, are full as great as our contingent fund will bear. This is therefore the firſt object of the preſent inſtitution——To eſtabliſh and ſupport an *Erſe Miſſion* in the Highlands and adjacent Iſlands of *Scotland.* 1

THE Iſles of *Jerſey* and *Guernſey* make the ſecond object of our inſtitution. The Lord has been pleaſed, by our much reſpected brother Mr. *Brackenbury*, to begin a very promiſing work in thoſe iſlands. Several ſocieties have been formed: and the Lord has alſo raiſed up a very ſenſible and zealous young man, whoſe native language is the *French*, and who is likely to be highly uſeful to the cauſe of GOD. He is now ſtationed in *Guernſey*, where ſome aſſiſtance has been already given him to ſupply his neceſſary wants, and probably more will be yet required. In *Jerſey* Mr. *Brackenbury* bears the whole burden of the expence at preſent, but we cannot expect this to be always the caſe. No doubt but the larger ſocieties will ſoon be enabled to ſupport their own expences: but ſtill, as the work increaſes, the infant ſocieties will ſtand in need of aſſiſtance. This is therefore our ſecond view in the preſent inſtitution——To nurſe and carry on the work which is now breaking forth among the *French* Proteſtants in our iſlands of *Jerſey* and *Guernſey.* 2

THE third object we have in view, is our *Weſt India* iſlands, where a field is opened to us among the negroes beyond any thing that could have been expected. *Eleven hundred* blacks have been already united in ſociety in the iſland of *Antigua* 3

through

through the ſucceſsful labours of Mr. *Baxter*; and the greateſt part of them, we have reaſon to believe, are converted to GOD. But we have only that ſingle miniſter in thoſe iſlands, Mr. *Lamburt*, whom we ſent from the States, being obliged to return on account of his ill ſtate of health. Nor can our brethren in the States afford us any aſſiſtance in the *Weſt India* iſlands, the call for preachers being ſo great on the continent. In the iſland of *St. Chriſtopher's* we have received conſiderable encouragement. And the planters in general are conſtrained to acknowledge, that the negroes who are united to *us* and to the *Moravians*, are the moſt laborious and faithful ſervants they have: which favourable ſentiment, through the bleſſing of GOD, has laid open the whole country to our labours among the blacks; and we ſeem to want nothing but preachers, under the divine influence, to gather in many thouſands of them. And theſe iſlands ſeem to have a peculiar claim on the inhabitants of *Britain*. Our country is enriched by the labours of the poor ſlaves who cultivate the ſoil, and ſurely the leaſt compenſation we can make them, is to endeavour to enrich them in return with the riches of grace. But the grand conſideration to the children of GOD, is the value of the ſouls of theſe negroes, a ſet of people utterly deſpiſed by all the world, except the Methodiſts and Moravians. And yet I have no doubt but a moſt glorious goſpel-harveſt would ſoon be diſplayed to our view among that miſerable people, if they were ſufficiently ſupplied with goſpel-miniſters. This is therefore the third object of our inſtitution——To eſtabliſh and ſupport miſſions in our *Weſt India* iſlands.

THE provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec and the iſland of Newfoundland, make the fourth and laſt object of the preſent plan. We have lately ſent a Miſſionary to *Harbour Grace* in *New-*

foundland,

foundland, and his labours have been bleſſed; but his ſingle endeavours are not likely to carry the work of GOD to that extent which every pious ſoul muſt wiſh for. In *Nova Scotia* we have about *three hundred* whites and *two hundred* blacks in ſociety according to the laſt accounts, but have only three travelling preachers for the whole province; ſo that moſt of our congregations have preaching but once in a month. In the province of *Quebec* a few pious ſoldiers have formed ſocieties at *Quebec* and *Montreal* on the Methodiſt plan, among whom we have reaſon to believe that our preachers would be gladly received.

SUCH an open door has not been known perhaps for many ages, as is now preſented to us on the continent of America. And it has long been an adjudged caſe in our conferences, that "when "GOD is at any time pleaſed to pour out his "ſpirit more abundantly, we ought at that time "to ſend more labourers than uſual into that part "of the harveſt *." If it be a principal mark of true wiſdom in *temporal* things to watch every opportunity—how much more in *ſpiritual*, which are of infinitely greater importance? How attentive ſhould we be to the times of refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord, to improve to the utmoſt all thoſe bleſſed occaſions. Nor ſhould any lover of Zion object to the diſtance of thoſe countries from us. Oceans are nothing to GOD, and they ſhould be no obſtruction to his people in reſpect to the love they ſhould bear one towards another. This therefore is the fourth and laſt object of the preſent inſtitution——To ſend miſſionaries to our provinces in *America* and the iſland of *Newfoundland*.

* See the large Minutes of our Conference, Qu. 9th.

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A PARTICULAR account of the miſſions, with any letters or extracts of letters from the miſſionaries or others, that are worthy of publication, ſhall be printed as ſoon as poſſible after every one of our annual conferences, and a copy preſented to every ſubſcriber: in which alſo the receipts and diſburſements of the preceding year, with an alphabetical liſt of the names of the ſubſcribers (except where it is otherwiſe deſired), ſhall be laid before the Public. The aſſiſtants of our circuits reſpectively will be ſo kind as to bring the money ſubſcribed to the enſuing conference, and ſo from year to year.

THE preaching of the goſpel is an object of the greateſt importance; and the preſent ſtate of mankind muſt cauſe very frequent and painful ſenſations to the truly pious—that the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST ſhould be circumſcribed by ſuch narrow bounds, and Satan rule ſo great a part of the world: but "how ſhall they call on him in "whom they have not believed? And how ſhall "they believe in him of whom they have not heard? "And how ſhall they hear without a preacher? "And how ſhall they preach, except they be "ſent? As it is written, How beautiful are the "feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and "bring glad tidings of good things!" And as the LORD is pleaſed in general to carry on his bleſſed work by ſecond cauſes, let the ſacred ardour of divine love kindle in your ſouls, my beloved brethren, a holy zeal of being honoured inſtruments in promoting of it, according to your ſeveral ſtations. Numerous and wonderful are the promiſes in ſacred writ which aſſure us that "the fulneſs of the Gentiles ſhall come in:" That "all ſhall know the LORD from the leaſt to the "greateſt:" That "righteouſneſs ſhall cover the "earth as the waters the ſea:" That "the Hea-

"then

" then ſhall be the inheritance of the MESSIAH,
" the uttermoſt parts of the earth his poſſeſſion,
" and all the kingdoms of the world the kingdoms
" of our LORD and his CHRIST." We know not, it is true, the particular time. However, let us all, as far as lies in our power, contribute to this great event, and prepare the way for it.

THE *Roman Catholics* have manifeſted aſtoniſhing zeal in the miſſions they have eſtabliſhed in *China* and other parts of the Eaſt. Their contributions for the purpoſe have been almoſt boundleſs: And ſhall *Proteſtants* be leſs zealous for the glory of GOD, when their religion is ſo much more pure. Alas! this is really the caſe. Nor let us object that the *Romaniſts* are richer than we—that even crowned heads have uſed their utmoſt influence in the former caſe. But let us rather remember that GOD works by the ſmalleſt means, yea he delights ſo to do. He rejoices to " perfect ſtrength in weakneſs, and to ordain " praiſe out of the mouths of babes and ſuck- " lings." Hitherto the LORD has bleſſed us in this very way, raiſing very large and lively ſocieties from very ſmall beginnings. And if we engage in the preſent undertaking in the ſpirit of faith, our endeavours ſhall be ſucceſsful: they ſhall ſpread like *Elijah*'s cloud, and a gracious rain ſhall deſcend on the inhabitants of the earth. Let us do all with prayer and thankſgiving, and that GOD who never fails his people, will aſſuredly uſe us for his own glory.

BLESSED be GOD! our ſpiritual reſources are amazing. Numerous, I am fully perſuaded, are the preachers among us, who, in the true ſpirit of apoſtles, count all things but dung, that they may win CHRIST, and win ſouls to him; who carry their lives in their hands, and long to ſpend and be ſpent in their Maſter's glorious cauſe.

cauſe. Let us therefore endeavour to draw forth theſe reſources, and ſpread them out to the uttermoſt. Then ſhall the little leaven imperceptibly win its widening way, till it has leavened the whole lump of mankind. And while we are unitedly watering the whole world around us, our own ſouls ſhall be watered again: the Methodiſt Connection ſhall become a ſeminary to fill the vineyard of CHRIST with devoted labourers, and be made the moſt valuable, the moſt extenſive bleſſing, not only to the preſent age, but to the generations that are yet to come.

I am,

Dearly beloved in the LORD,

With great reſpect,

Your humble and moſt affectionate

Brother and Servant,

LONDON,
March 13, 1786.

THOMAS COKE.